

April 20, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Michael Arcuri today announced that that Environmental Protection Agency is awarding the Workforce Investment Board of Herkimer, Madison and Oneida Counties a \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training Grant to upgrade the skills of local workers for environmental cleanups in the city of Utica.

"Redeveloping Brownfields is an important part of revitalizing our community," **Arcuri said**. "It is equally important that as we rebuild our housing and infrastructure that we provide the people who live in and around our Brownfields the chance to play a major role in restoring and renovating their neighborhoods. I was very pleased to work with the WIB, the city and the county on this project because it provides new jobs for the people of our community and new hope for the future of the city of Utica."

"By recruiting, training and employing local residents to clean up the community, we get the best of both worlds: new jobs and a cleaner community," **said WIB Chair Gary Scalzo**. "Transforming abandoned or contaminated sites sets the stage for bustling business centers, new parks and other developments. It shows that the right thing to do for the environment is the right thing to do for the economy."

WIB Executive Director Alice J. Savino said the project will help give area residents both skills and certifications needed to address lead-contaminated structures within Utica's inner city. "The funding we have secured will help the people who are looking for better jobs and a better community have both," she said. "We are excited about the potential of this project to bring new energy and opportunity to the historic parts of Utica's heritage that have fallen on hard times, and to provide the skills that can connect youth and adults with careers in the green and environmental sectors. We had a strong partnership of government officials helping us with this project, including Congressman Arcuri, County Executive Picente and Mayor Roefaro. We thank all of them for their efforts and their support for our work."

The WIB plans to train 75 students, place 70 graduates in environmental jobs, and track graduates for one year. The training program will consist of nine 12-week training cycles that will include a core curriculum of 200 hours. Training will include 40-hour HAZWOPER, 10- and 30-hour OSHA health and safety training, lead and asbestos abatement, green technologies and fork lift operator training. Primary trainers will be the Mohawk Valley Community College and Oneida County Health Department. With the help of community partners, the program will recruit unemployed adults, low-income individuals working part-time, older youths, and ex-offenders living in the City of Utica. As the lead agency in the region's One-Stop Career Center system, the WIB will use its services and employer contacts to place graduates in environmental jobs.

Savino said the WIB and MVCC expect to begin recruiting for the program this fall, once all federal contracts and documents are signed.

EPA's Brownfields Job Training Program helps train people for jobs in the assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields properties, including abandoned gas stations, old textile mills, closed smelters, and other abandoned industrial and commercial properties. These investments target under-served and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods - places where environmental cleanups and new jobs are most needed. This year, EPA awarded 12 grants across the country. Since 1998, EPA has awarded more than \$33 million in brownfields job training funds. Nationally, more than 5,300 individuals have been trained through the Brownfields Job Training Grant Program, and 3,400 have been placed in full-time employment in the environmental field.

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